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EDITORIAL NOTES

History in the elementary school presents a problem and an opportunity. The problem has been ably discussed by Professor Henry Johnson of the Teachers College. He has criticized the imaginative history which looks for its construction largely to the child and insists that real history from the hands and heads of competent historians is a pabulum that if properly presented is quite digestible for children in the elementary school, and he has presented illustrations in his study on "History in the Elementary School." It is not too much to say that the material which Professor Johnson suggests can be unhesitatingly recognized as proper for the school and its pupils. The question is rather whether the material is adequate to the task which history has to meet in the elementary school.

History is the philosophy of the child and of many who are no longer children. It is history which must interpret the curriculum if it is to be interpreted to the elementary-school pupil. It is history which must connect the conceptions of the child with the institutions and life of the community about him. Consider for example how essential history is to such an admirable textbook in civics as that written by Professor Dunn, *The Community and the Citizen*, with its outline of the beginnings of the community, its site, what the people are seeking in the community, the family, and the services rendered to the community by the family, the making of Americans, etc. The great difficulty is that our histories are as yet histories only of politics. It is only a few of the industries, such as that of cotton on account of its vivid political interest, that are given their real value in the making as life of the community.

The nub of the problem is found in the relation of this material to the child's intelligence. It is true that such material as that which Professor Johnson presents, can be made intelligible to

the child. The question is whether this is the material which the child needs. And the answer to this question can only be given when we know what the child needs to have explained to him. In this sense it is important that the child should be almost as active in the direction of his historical study as is the graduate student who is at work on some historical problem that has become his own. For this function of history there is no study that should be so flexible and so pervasive in the whole curriculum, none in which the child's easy passage from imaginative processes to those of observation and reasoning should be more evident. History in the elementary school should be what was called "music" in the Greek child's education, the meaning of the life and the institutions about him, stated in social terms.

The most important phase of history as the groundwork of the child's instruction is its concrete social character. We are

Social Situations the Terms in which Children think	just beginning to appreciate to what an extent children do and must do their thinking in social forms. If a child undertakes to define an object or a situation his irresistible tendency is to describe it as part of the activity of some person—e. g., a crime is "when a cop arrests you." It is through social
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situations that children carry out their generalizations and draw their conclusions, and it is the province of the school to make a continuous intellectual discipline out of this native capacity of children, through the historical treatment of as many subjects in the curriculum as possible. As the method of children's thinking history is not only the philosophy but the logic of the elementary-school curriculum.